



NEWS



News Headlines 9/26/2017

- ‘Brother firefighters against brother firefighters’
- Lear road crash results in extrication and serious injury

'Brother firefighters against brother firefighters'

Paola Baker, Daily Press

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BARSTOW — As Election Day nears, Barstow firefighters are ramping up efforts to support the “Yes on Measure J” campaign — but are battling resistance from another local firefighters union, who claim the campaign paints them in a bad light.

The measure, expected to be on the special election ballot in November, will impose a half-cent sales tax throughout the city if approved by voters. The funds will be used to bolster the financially-strapped Barstow Fire Protection District, which has been struggling with increased retirement costs.

The half-cent sales tax hike could generate an estimated \$3.8 million per year, with residents paying an average of \$47 a year, according to city officials. It would be a special purpose tax, requiring two-thirds approval of Barstow voters.

Barstow Professional Firefighters Association president John Wymore, a BFPD captain, spoke about the measure during public comments at Monday’s City Council meeting. He made strong statements against the San Bernardino County Professional Firefighters Union, or Local 935, and their involvement with recent campaign efforts against Measure J.

According to Wymore, the Local 935 union has “spent \$40,000 to defeat Measure J” because they hope to annex the BFPD into the **County Fire Department**.

“In all my years of fire service, I haven’t heard of anything like this before,” Wymore said. “Brother firefighters against brother firefighters — it just blows my mind.”

Wymore then went on to explain that Local 935’s president told him he was “upset that we’re trying to get this passed on their backs.” He painted this as being motivated by the Barstow union’s statements regarding annexation.

“What he means by this is we’ve told you, the public, that if Measure J fails the Council will have no other option than to let your fire department annex to County Fire,” Wymore said.

Jim Grigoli, Local 935’s president, didn’t exactly deny Wymore’s statements, although he questioned the motivation behind them. He confirmed the union is against Measure J, but said annexation wasn’t the push behind it.

“That reason has nothing to do with us being against the tax measure,” Grigoli said. “I believe they are hurting the San Bernardino County firefighters by making derogatory comments about County Fire and the parcel tax measure. That’s the only reason why.”

Grigoli explained that both unions had been in talks regarding the BFPD’s annexation into County Fire for the last two years, but things changed when the sales tax measure was presented. Grigoli said he spoke to Barstow’s firefighter union about the measure, simply asking them to “keep us out of it.”

“I spoke to their association president and asked him not to use the parcel tax measure against us,” Grigoli said. “Sure enough, a week after I speak with him there’s a statement in the paper that says ‘if you don’t vote for this sales tax measure, County Fire will bring in the parcel tax,’ which is simply not true.”

While acknowledging the union has contributed financially to anti-Measure J efforts, Grigoli flatly denied Wymore's assertion that Local 935 had spent \$40,000 on the campaign.

"The \$40,000 figure is false," Grigoli said. "This has nothing to do with 'big union money.' It's just ridiculous what they're posting and saying."

Grigoli was referring to a post on the Barstow Professional Firefighters Union Facebook page, which asked residents to vote for Measure J and "keep big union money out of Barstow."

"The county doesn't just come in and decide to impose a tax on citizens; the City Council would have to make that decision," Grigoli said. "I'm completely frustrated by it because at the end of the day, we're trying to get funding for County Fire to serve unincorporated county areas, and their comments hurt us."

Wymore, however, stressed that the sales tax measure would overall be much cheaper for Barstow residents, while maintaining much-touted local control. He likened it to the Measure A tax passed last year in Apple Valley.

"They saved their fire district and now, look at them," Wymore said. "They've been able to open new fire stations and added new firefighters, which we desperately need."

Wymore's passionate statements seemed to have resonated with the crowd at Monday's meeting, with a few residents commenting on the need to support the measure.

"We might have some differences of agreement with some of you on the City Council, but at least we have a right to speak out," longtime resident Mike Hernandez said. "If the county takes over, would they even answer our questions? The main thing to me is, we need local control."

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20170926/brother-firefighters-against-brother-firefighters>

Lear road crash results in extrication and serious injury

Z107.7 News

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A two-vehicle crash just before 7 p.m. last night at Lear and Two Mile Road in Twentynine Palms left one man with serious injuries. According to Fire Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle, the victim was transported to Desert Hospital via Morongo Basin Ambulance following an extrication by units from Twentynine Palms. The driver and a passenger from the second vehicle involved refused aid for more minor injuries opting to go to the hospital on their own.

<http://z1077fm.com/lear-road-crash-results-in-extrication-and-serious-injury/>